

Chairman; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Shane Hill; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Mick Murray

Division 15: Fisheries, \$25 948 000 -

Mr A.P. O’Gorman, Chairman.

Mr F.M. Logan, Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

Mr P.P. Rogers, Executive Director.

Mr B. Mezzatesta, Manager, Financial and Administrative Services.

Mr P.J. Millington, Director, Fisheries Management Services.

Dr J.W. Penn, Director, Fisheries Research.

Ms H.G. Brayford, Manager, Strategic Planning and Policy.

The CHAIRMAN: This Estimates Committee will be reported by Hansard staff. The daily proof *Hansard* will be published at 9.00 am tomorrow. Members should not raise questions about matters of general concern that do not have an item of expenditure in the consolidated fund. The Estimates Committee’s consideration of the estimates will be restricted to discussion of those items for which a vote of money is proposed. We are dealing with estimates of expenditure and that should be the prime focus of this committee. Although there is scope for members to examine many matters, questions need to be clearly related to matters of expenditure. For example, members are free to pursue performance indicators that are included in the *Budget Statements* while there remains a clear link between the questions and the estimates.

In this session and under the sessional order, a minimum of 30 minutes is allocated per authority for the committee to examine off-budget authority operations and budgets. The sessional order also recognises off-budget authority officers as ministerial advisers.

It will assist in the committee’s examination if questions and answers are kept brief, without unnecessarily omitting material information. It is the intention of the Chairman to ensure that as many questions as possible are asked and answered, and that both questions and answers are short and to the point.

The parliamentary secretary may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee, rather than ask that the question be put on notice for the next sitting week. For the purpose of following up the provision of this information, I ask the parliamentary secretary to clearly indicate to the committee which supplementary information he agrees to provide and I will then allocate a reference number. If supplementary information is to be provided, I seek the parliamentary secretary’s cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the committee clerk by 6 June 2003, so that members may read it before the report and third reading stages. If the supplementary information cannot be provided within that time, written advice is required of the day by which the information will be made available.

Details in relation to supplementary information have been provided to both members and advisers and, accordingly, I ask the parliamentary secretary to cooperate with those requirements. I caution members that if a minister or parliamentary secretary asks that a matter be put on notice, it is up to the member to lodge the question on notice with the Clerk’s office. Only supplementary information that the parliamentary secretary agrees to provide will be sought by 6 June 2003.

It will also greatly assist Hansard staff if, when referring to the program statements, volumes or the consolidated fund estimates, members give the page number, item, program, and amount in preface to their question.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: I refer the parliamentary secretary to the major policy decisions on page 268 of the *Budget Statements*. I note that there will be reductions to the budget through savings in relation to “at sea” operations. This is described in the second last dot point of the significant issues and trends on page 268 as certain “at sea” functions. Can the parliamentary secretary explain what they are? There will be a general budget reduction as a result of the Functional Review Taskforce of \$1.2 million in each of the three out years from 2004-05 to 2006-07. Where will the reductions occur for both those items?

[5.10 pm]

Mr F.M. LOGAN: There are two parts to that question. The first is the amalgamation of certain “At Sea” functions, which is the second last dot point on page 268. That, as the member knows, and as has been announced by the minister, is an amalgamation of the functions of the work done at sea by the Department of Fisheries, through its research and inspection vessels, and the work done by the Department of Transport, which is under the Department for Planning and Infrastructure, in the inspection of boats, licences and safety equipment on seagoing vessels. The ministers have announced an amalgamation of those two functions, under the responsibility of the Department of Fisheries, which increases the size of the “navy” - as the minister referred to it - significantly. Those numbers will be given shortly by Mr Rogers. It also provides a greater efficiency in the functions of inspections of craft. If a craft is being inspected because of concerns about its fish take, for

Chairman; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Shane Hill; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Mick Murray

example, it is logical for licensing and safety features of that craft to be inspected at the same time. That is the reason for bringing both of those “navies” together. Mr Rogers will add to that answer.

Mr ROGERS: The numbers in the *Budget Statements* reflect the proposed savings, but the budget at this stage does not include the allocation to be transferred from the Department for Planning and Infrastructure to the Department of Fisheries budget. That will not occur until the mid-term adjustments, because those decisions were taken by government fairly late in the piece. Discussion between the departments on the detail of the funds to be transferred, and to give effect to those operations, are yet to be finalised.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: It is interesting that you describe them as savings rather than cuts. Do not comment on that!

Mr F.M. LOGAN: The second point raised by the member is about the functional review, and the general budget reductions of \$1.2 million in the out years 2004-05 to 2006-07. Those savings will be looked at across all areas of the department. Particularly looking at the consolidated funds, for example, the effect will be on recreational fishing output, fish and fish habitat operations, the minor commercial fisheries and, to a minor extent, aquaculture. The department will be looking at all of its functions, but primarily those areas.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: On page 271 is an output performance measures table, and under the heading “Quality” is the item “Fish stocks identified as being at risk or vulnerable through exploitation”. I have a number of questions on this item. First of all, last year’s budget estimated that there would be four fish stocks at risk, but that has now changed to two as the estimate for the year, and the target for the coming years is two. Why was there an increase to four that never eventuated, and which fish stocks do these budget estimates and actuals relate to?

Mr PENN: The four fish stocks referred to in last year’s budget included the pilchard stocks around the south coast, which were severely depleted by a virus attack some years ago, and they were following through. They have subsequently recovered under a zero-quota basis on the south coast, in two of the zones. We now have two different fisheries subject to concern. One is the shark stocks around the south coast, particularly the dusky whaler and whiskery shark stocks. The other fishery which has an issue with it is the Lake Argyle catfish fishery, in which there was a substantial increase in fishing effort, which is now of concern. The number of at-risk fisheries went up to four, and is now back to two.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: I only heard three - pilchard, sharks and Lake Argyle catfish. Are there two species of shark?

Mr PENN: There are two species of shark in the fishery, so the fishery is of concern.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: Page 273 shows two fish stocks under the recreational fisheries heading which are also considered at risk. The budget estimate for last year was two, and it is still two for this year. Are these the same fish stocks carried on, or has one been found to be secure while another is shown to be a problem?

Mr PENN: These figures relate to Shark Bay snapper stocks, where there are two stocks under threat. It is the same two stocks in each case.

Mr P.B. WATSON: I refer to the seventh dot point on page 268, which reads -

The need to continue to pursue opportunities in developing markets, including those in Europe and America in the face of instability in the State’s traditional seafood export markets.

I know that in Albany people are trying to develop the herring and salmon markets. Are there any other areas in which the Government is trying to upgrade the overseas market?

Mr F.M. LOGAN: That refers to the good work the processors and the marketers are doing in promoting Western Australian fish catches overseas in the face of instability. That primarily refers to the instability in the crayfish market. I will ask Mr Rogers to address the question of promoting other fish species.

Mr ROGERS: Most of the initiatives in this area are industry-driven, rather than department-driven, and they happen on a project by project basis. The two issues of principal concern at the moment are clearly salmon and herring, as the member mentioned, and rock lobsters. The minister’s office and the department are in ongoing contact at the moment on issues in the marketing of rock lobster. As members will be aware, that market was in free fall, associated with a range of factors including appreciation of the Australian dollar and the virus affecting the tourism trade. Those factors are very likely appearing in other commodities, apart from rock lobsters. It is a key issue, and discussions are under way with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission about the options that may be available to stabilise that position. As the member can imagine, it is very difficult, in the national competition policy situation, to try to do things outside the law. Obviously, things must be done within the framework of the Trade Practices Act when this problem of market management is being dealt with. Hopefully, the industry is looking at separate solutions. It is certainly looking at the question of rearranging the

Chairman; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Shane Hill; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Mick Murray

supply side of the rock lobster market and perhaps modifying the total take for the season next year. We are yet to receive advice from industry on that issue. I am told that it plans to provide that advice by 1 September. The processing and catchment sectors are involved in those discussions.

[5.20 pm]

Mr P.B. WATSON: Are there plans for other areas to take up the marketing ideas that have developed in the Albany region for salmon and herring?

Mr ROGERS: Not at this stage.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: I refer the parliamentary secretary to the outcomes and key effectiveness indicators on page 270. I note with interest that the budgeted level of community satisfaction with the conservation of fish habitat was to be 90 per cent last year and this year. I note that last year the estimated approval was 80 per cent. I accept that 90 per cent is a fairly high level of satisfaction. What occurred in 2001-02 and 2002-03 to contribute to a lower satisfaction level than that which the department expected? Did something happen that caused people to be dissatisfied with the department's conservation of fish habitat?

Mr F.M. LOGAN: As that is a response to an operational survey undertaken by the Department of Fisheries, I will pass that to Mr Rogers.

Mr ROGERS: In broad terms, if we do nothing, our satisfaction rating goes up. This is one of the dilemmas with these sorts of data. I believe it is fair to say that in 2001 and 2002 much of the debate was about the Jurien Bay area. Of course, that impacts on the data. Other work is being done on a range of small fish habitats. The Cottesloe habitat is an example of one that was positively received by the community, and I guess that led to an improvement. However, I suspect that as some of these things are implemented, the figures start to flow the other way. It is a dilemma in terms of effective management.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: It was said that limits were placed on fishing for snapper in Shark Bay. How does this community satisfaction response compare with what happened then? I know it is quite some time ago. I accept that the whole concept of community satisfaction is subjective, depending on the survey that is conducted, what the responses are and how informed they are, I suppose. Was there a good satisfaction response previously to the actions the department took?

Mr ROGERS: I believe so. Obviously, there are always people who do not believe the outcomes. Much of the implementation is very dependent on getting community support. Therefore, there is a correlation, particularly in recreational fishing, when people are not competing for allocations. We are trying to do a job, which is sustainable resource management. That is generally why there are higher rates of satisfaction, despite those issues with snapper compared relatively with, say, fish habitat issues.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I know that the member was aware when he was in government of that Shark Bay exercise and the limitations that were put on the catch. From what I have been informed by the Department of Fisheries, that is now proving to have positive results as the numbers come back. In fact, that may well be a very good story to release to the general public, as it is an example of intervention rescuing a fishery that was on the brink of collapse and bringing pink snapper back to a successful and thriving species in that fishery.

Mr S.R. HILL: I refer the parliamentary secretary to the seventh dot point of major initiatives for 2003-04 on page 274. Will the parliamentary secretary expand on the education strategies that will be put in place?

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Again, as this is an operational function, I will pass the question over to Mr Rogers or Mr Millington to provide an explanation. However, from what the Department of Fisheries has advised me, its education program to make recreational fisher people, in particular, aware of the new bag limits in the north west is receiving a good response.

Mr MILLINGTON: After extensive consultation last year on the rules for the abalone fishery, the minister agreed to the introduction of a revised regime for the recreational abalone fishery, which includes extensive closure periods. The major initiative is to communicate that to the client groups. The whole objective is to make illegal fishing more prominent, because people will be fishing in a legal manner only in certain periods that coincide with the periods during which most recreational fishers want to fish. Illegal activity will then be more obvious. It also has the advantage of resource conservation by limiting the period within which people will be able to fish. It has a double purpose.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: In two places on pages 273 and 274 reference is made to marron. The second one refers to the fact that a status report on the marron fishery was finalised. First, is that report available, because I would like a copy? Secondly, it is my belief that marron is a species at significant risk of extinction in the wild because

Chairman; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Shane Hill; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Mick Murray

of water quality problems, salinity and fishing pressure combined with drought. Is the department actively involved in researching and managing the marron fishery?

Mr ROGERS: Yes, there is a report, and we are happy to pass that report to the member. That report led to a shortening of the marron season last summer, which, from my recollection, went for 16 days. Regulations cover the Margaret River hairy marron, which is a substock of marron. That subspecies has features that are not found elsewhere in the population. My understanding is that regulations were introduced to cover that, and we will forward to the member a copy of those regulations.

[5.30 pm]

Mr B.K. MASTERS: Are the research and management activities of the department on marron stocks, other than the Margaret River hairy subspecies, primarily restricted to the review that has been done or is there ongoing monitoring?

Dr PENN: An ongoing research program annually monitors the stocks and has stemmed over several decades. We have recently received a grant to undertake a major research project to update that work and look at the changes in distribution of marron across the south west. It is a major part of our program and also includes work on the Margaret River substock.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: I refer to page 269 in the *Budget Statements* and the total consolidated fund appropriations for 2003-04 of just under \$26 million. We have already briefly touched on the serious issues affecting the western rock lobster fishery but, in general, the whole fishery is under extreme pressure from the impact of severe acute respiratory syndrome and other international crises. Can the parliamentary secretary tell me what proportion of this budget will be immediately directed to those issues? The last thing we want is a whole budget process in place if these industries are falling over. What immediate action is being taken on some of these critical issues that the industry is now facing?

Mr F.M. LOGAN: As Mr Rogers has already pointed out, the primary role of the Department of Fisheries is to research, provide advice and assistance, and monitor and enforce the licences of various fisheries. When the market is affected by external crises like SARS in Asia, the department's job is not to market the various species overseas in the way that the member has described. It is not the role of the Department of Fisheries to counter that; it is the job of the promoters of the various fisheries selling overseas. They must take that into consideration when looking at their own market. However, the minister works closely with the various fisheries and encourages them to work together to come up with strategies to counter those problems, particularly the rock lobster industry, as it is such a major component of fisheries exports for Western Australia.

As Mr Rogers has already indicated, the next meeting of the Rock Lobster Industry Advisory Committee will bring together the various parties to determine how they will deal with not only a fall in prices because of various market drivers in the Asian region - SARS being one of them - but also the possibility of a very good catch in next year's season. They will need a strategy to deal with possibly a low price but a high catch. It is the role of fisheries and the minister to facilitate the people who catch the fish, and the people who process and sell the fish must get together and come up with strategies to counter market problems.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: Will anyone from fisheries be working just in that area? Will some of those resources be diverted to examine the current issues being faced rather than carry on with a business as normal approach, because business is not as normal?

Mr F.M. LOGAN: In terms of research on that fish stock and what the take will be next year, of course -

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: I am talking about marketing.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I will pass over to Mr Rogers but I do not think he will go beyond the advice that I have given.

Mr ROGERS: I have spent half of today dealing with that particular issue and getting the matter before the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission to find out what scope there is for any government intervention. If one is to move towards government intervention, then clearly it must be done within the law and with the support of the industry, which is largely driven by the private sector. Governments must be careful about how they intervene, but we are exploring those options through the minister's office. It is fair to say that the current minister is taking an active interest in engaging the individual rock lobster processors and meeting with the rock lobster peak body - the catching and processing sectors - to keep abreast of their thoughts and the options they are exploring. Views are coming forward ranging from "the Government shouldn't be involved" to "can the Government assist us", without any real clarification about how one can assist. One of the important initiatives is the removal of tariffs within the European Economic Community. We have been working collaboratively with industry on that. Industry is making an effort and we are using the chairman of the Rock

Chairman; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Shane Hill; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Mick Murray

Lobster Industry Advisory Committee, Ron Edwards, to try through Bob Fisher to get those tariffs removed. If that occurs it will open up a whole new market. The job of the Government and the department is to facilitate rather than to do. The doors need to be open to ensure that the marine stewardship accreditation and other factors stay in place to give the best possible edge from which the market can operate in a forever changing world and under certain constraints.

Mr P.B. WATSON: On page 278 of the *Budget Statements* under major initiatives for 2002-03, it states that the Government has -

Constructed a fish ladder on the Goodga River, near Albany, to assist with the conservation of native fish in cooperation with the Department of Environmental Protection and the Waters and Rivers Commission.

Can the parliamentary secretary explain what that entails?

Mr F.M. LOGAN: No I cannot. I will pass this question to Mr Millington who knows all about fish ladders.

Mr MILLINGTON: The species in question goes under the common name of trout minnow. A gauging weir has been in place on that river for some years and was put up by the Water and Rivers Commission. The trout minnow requires as much habitat as possible because it is a relatively rare species but the gauging weir has impeded its free movement up and down the river. The construction in question consists of a series of small pools in a gradient going upwards that allows the fish to gradually move up the gradient from the lower to the higher pools. We are hoping that the minnows will move into the higher reaches and repopulate them. I understand the minister is formally opening the facility next week.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: I refer to page 282 and the expenses from ordinary activities. There is an explanatory note for employee expenses that lists the full-time equivalents for 2001-02 actual, 2002-03 estimated actual and 2003-04 estimates as 382, 376 and 376 respectively. I also note that the costs in 2001-02 for employee expenses were \$19.151 million. They went down to \$19.107 million for 2002-03 and then up to \$19.923 million for 2003-04. Can the parliamentary secretary explain why that figure has blown out some \$800 000 when the number of employees has decreased?

[5.40 pm]

Mr F.M. LOGAN: As this is an operational and financial matter I will ask Mr Mezzatesta to answer.

Mr MEZZATESTA: The major variation around our FTE levels is linked to the degree of success we have with our external funding, mainly in the area of research. Those variations occur from year to year as we either get projects up or we do not. There is always a significant variation. The actual salaries cost recorded will vary according to the level of the people who make up the FTEs. For example, very senior people in the initial year will make the cost quite high. If those FTEs were replaced with people of a much lower level there would be a salary variation. There is also an impact by the consumer price index. It is not totally useful to look just at FTE numbers; one must look at where those people sit in the various salary bands.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: They must obviously be very qualified people.

Mr MEZZATESTA: Every one of them.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: The second output at page 272, management of the State's recreational fisheries, contains a table that shows a reduction of about \$160 000 in operating revenue for the coming year. Does that mean less income from recreational fishing licences; and, if so, why is that? I would have thought that with our growing population there would be an increase in recreational fishing licences and that the department would not be so generous as to reduce its licence fees. Will you explain what is going on?

Mr MEZZATESTA: There are a few questions. Revenue from recreational fishing licences is not expected to reduce. The budget estimate contains a modest CPI adjustment in the fees. The revenue variations relate mainly to the success or otherwise of our external research funding. If we lose a commercial project we may gain one in a recreational program or vice versa. The variations are due mainly to external funding, not recreational licence fees.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: Where in the *Budget Statements*, if anywhere, is the amount of money raised from recreational fishing licences shown?

Mr MEZZATESTA: I do not know whether it is specifically shown as a line item. It is contained in the aggregate \$3 million in the recreational output. It is also shown in the aggregate figure in the statement of financial performance at page 282.

Chairman; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Shane Hill; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Mick Murray

Mr B.K. MASTERS: Can you provide supplementary information on that; namely, the amount of money raised by recreational fishing licences operating in Western Australia?

Mr ROGERS: Yes, we will provide that. A lot of the data is available in our annual reports. A person can get a picture of the department's revenue sources from year to year and the details the member is seeking from the annual reports.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: I will not pursue my request. I will look at the annual reports.

Mr S.R. HILL: The last dot point at page 279 of the *Budget Statements* refers to the development of a geographic information system plan for the department. What is the plan?

Mr ROGERS: The geographic information system plan involves extending the data requirements of the land information system to the sea. For example, each time we issue a pearling lease we need a chart that shows the legal format of where the waters are and the structure. The plan involves adding an information system that meets all our requirements. It will link our data to spatial distribution. It will provide a level of information that is more useful in meeting our long-term planning and information needs, which in turn flows from our customers, fisheries and legal requirements. It will upgrade the existing system into a more competitive one.

Mr S.R. HILL: Will it link in with the strategies of the Department of Land Administration and the Department for Planning and Infrastructure?

Mr ROGERS: As appropriately used.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: I refer to the appropriation for delivery of the third output at page 275 of the *Budget Statements*. The actual figure for 2001-02 is \$4.764 million and the estimated actual for 2002-03 is \$3.104 million. The 2003-04 budget estimate is \$3.637 million. Can the wide variation in these figures be explained?

Mr F.M. LOGAN: The member is asking about the drop off in the total appropriation from 2001-02 to the budget estimate for 2003-04?

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: Yes.

Mr ROGERS: If need be supplementary information can be provided. In real terms there are two types of expenditure in that budget. One refers to all industry, which is cost-recovery industry. The other is aquaculture. The figures show a reduction in activity this year that will probably pick up next year. Vacant positions affect some of the outcomes and the expected outcome for the following year.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: I would appreciate that the supplementary information be provided. There is a 25 per cent difference in the figures. It will make interesting reading.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: The member is seeking the information that relates to the 2001-02 actual through to the 2003-04 budget estimate? We estimate there will be an increase from 2002-03 to 2003-04.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: That is right, but there is a substantial drop off from 2001-02.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I will qualify that if I may. The member is looking at the appropriation for delivery of the third output. He should look at the total cost of output at the top of the table. That shows there has been no drop off at all apart from last year, when it went down to \$7.994 million. It is expected to increase to \$8.367 million in 2003-04. If that figure is compared with the figure for 2001-02, it is actually an increase. The difference lies in the appropriation for delivery of the third output.

Mr ROGERS: In succinct terms, there has not been a significant reduction in output. The small drop off is due to some positions not being filled in 2002-03 that will be filled in 2003-04. Hence there is an expected improvement in the estimated actual. Variation around the net cost of the output is a function of some of the variations we get in our external research funding. Some years we get more aquaculture research projects up and running than in other years. It is a combination of those factors. I do not believe a detailed explanation will give the member any more information than that.

The CHAIRMAN: I must advise that the parliamentary secretary is the person who must answer. Advisers cannot just jump in; they must go through the parliamentary secretary. We must get things correct for *Hansard*.

[5.50 pm]

Mr F.M. LOGAN: The member should take note of the adjustments. Paragraph (b) at the bottom of that table states that the adjustments relate to movements in cash balances and other accrual items such as receivables, payables and superannuation. Those adjustments have changed from \$954 000 in 2001-02 to a budget estimate of negative \$6 000 in 2003-04. There is no change in the net appropriation. The only information we would be

Chairman; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Shane Hill; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Mick Murray

able to provide to the member for Merredin is a further breakdown of the adjustments. That should give him the information that he is looking for.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: The fifth dot point of the major initiatives on page 274 refers to a total allowable catch. Will the recreational snapper tag allocation system be reviewed? Country people who are trying to get those tags are disadvantaged as they must present in person.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: The boys from Collie want to go up there and catch some snapper!

Mr ROGERS: The simple answer is yes. Once the first season of this new initiative is completed, we will want to assess the program to see how effective it was, how we need to improve it and how we can change it the following year. That work will be done by the Recreational Fishing Advisory Council as part of its normal function.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: My main concern in that area is people having to present personally to pick up a tag. It disadvantages country people, especially those without access to the Internet.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: The very last capital works item on page 280 is an allocation of \$468 000 for what is called the small boats, outboards and trailers 2003-04 program. Could the parliamentary secretary or his advisers outline what that program is about? Does it involve some of the work that in the past has been done by the marine and harbours section of the transport department? That paid a lot of attention to the management and safety of small boats, outboards and trailers.

Mr MILLINGTON: That is the normal small boat, outboard and trailers capital replacement program. Each of our small boats has a defined life. As part of the integration with the Department for Planning and Infrastructure's marine arm, we expect a considerable rationalisation of the number of hulls in use around the State. From memory, there will be a reduction of about seven or eight. They will be reflected in next year's figures.

Mr P.B. WATSON: The third dot point on page 268 refers to "increased demand for more visible fisheries compliance presence, especially in the regional centres, focusing on recreational fishing". Does this mean that there will be more inspectors on the road; that is, at the beaches and dams and in the hinterland?

Mr F.M. LOGAN: We are looking at measures to increase compliance. That particularly involves catching those people from Collie who go to the mid west and do not hand their tags in.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Just because you cannot catch any!

Mr F.M. LOGAN: My understanding is - Mr Rogers will probably inform me if I am wrong - that people from Albany are fairly well behaved.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: They just do not get caught.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Does this mean there will be an increase in measures to stop poachers?

Mr MILLINGTON: At the moment we have three strands of activity. Last year there was a small increase in recreational licence fees. That additional money will go towards some mobile patrols that will be used in the south during summer and the north during winter. The amalgamation of the "At Sea" safety function, through which staff will come across from the Department for Planning and Infrastructure, will increase the number of people available to do marine safety and fisheries work simultaneously. That will give us an additional degree of flexibility. The third strand is our operational practices. We are always looking at those to see how we can increase the percentage of time our staff spend in the field.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Does the department encounter more poachers in any particular area? For example, is the problem mariners or people who take too many fish from the beach? Will the department target any particular area?

Mr ROGERS: Recreational fishing activity will be a major focus of the extra compliance resources that will result from these changed arrangements. The department will focus on seasonal and high-event incidents such as the abalone season and the marron season. It will also focus on the Mandurah crab fisheries, the peak of the snapper season in the Gascoyne and events in the Kimberley and Pilbara, such as the winter focus on barramundi and the like. It is not intended to use those resources in the commercial fisheries. Much of that work is done by other people within the organisation.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: I refer to the works in progress on page 280 and the new fisheries research facility at Hillarys. That project has already started, with \$2.425 million spent in this financial year. When did the work on this project commence, and when was the decision to locate that facility at Hillarys made?

Mr F.M. LOGAN: The decision to locate the facility was made last year -

Chairman; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Fran Logan; Mr Bernie Masters; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Shane Hill; Mr Brendon Grylls; Mr Mick Murray

Mr P.D. OMODEI: When last year?

Dr PENN: The initial decision about the capital budget for the project was made for the first budget of the Labor Government. The development approval was renewed in March. The original development approval had lapsed. On 10 May, tenders were called for the forward works component of the project. A site will be created effectively by expanding parking areas in the Hillarys marina northern precinct and re-routing the various services in the area. Physical activity is due to start in July.

Mr P.D. OMODEI: I refer to the schedule of administered expenses and revenues on page 285. I note that \$105 000 in grants and subsidies was expended in 2001-02, and \$184 000 was expended in 2002-03. There seems to be no budget whatsoever for 2003-04 and the out years. Can the parliamentary secretary provide a reason for the cut in grants and subsidies, and what they were for?

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I am advised that that is funding to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission which has been received but which is no longer available.

The appropriation was recommended.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm